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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the contours of a program of research focused on Australian youth and the transition they make within and between education and work. The project was initiated in 1978 and centered on longitudinal mail surveys. Questionnaires were sent to three cohorts aged 24 to 25 years old, 20 to 21 years, and 15 to 16 years. Samples involved 6,200, 6,600, and 5,400 people, respectively. The four-page questionnaires contain a core of items bearing on participation and attainments in eudcation and the labor force, along with measures of the following: quality of life; family background and schooling; influence of reference groups during the high school years and immediately thereafter; experiences during the first year in the labor force; living arrangements and family formation. Over 80 percent of those contacted responded without material inducement. The study suggests that if longitudinal studies on a national level are important and should continue, the following points should be considered: (1) providing an institutional identification, (2) seeking government funding; (3) seeking a long-term commitment of funds; (4) negotiating the terms of reference; (5) nominating a resource person; (6) establishing a database; and (7) providing for monitoring capability. Samples of the questionnaires are attached. (JAZ)

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TRANSITIONS

Longitudinal Mail Surveys of Australian Youth in Education and Work

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TRANSITIONS: Longitudinal Mail Surveys of Australian Youth in Education and Work

This paper describes the contours of a program of research focussed on Australian youth and the transitions they make within and between education and work. The program was initiated in 1978 and centers on longitudinal mail surveys of national probability samples, three at the present time, involving some 6200, 6600 and 5400 persons, respectively. Each sample was identified originally as part of national assessment programs conducted in 1975 and 1980. The longitudinal studies capitalize on the achievement data collected in these programs and add to these data information on participation in education and the labour force over the period from mid-teens to mid-twenties.

The three groups are samples of age cohorts four or five years apart in age. At present the oldest sample is 24 to 25 years old, the next oldest sample is 20 to 21 years of age, and the youngest sample is aged between 15 and 16 years. For the oldest sample we have data on achievement at age 14, and year-by-year information on participation in education and the labour force covering ages 17 to 23. In the case of the other two samples, parallel achievement data at age 10 are supplemented by participation data covering, respectively, ages 16 to 21 years and 16 years only. Further contact with the oldest sample has been suspended and resources redirected to continuing contact with the other two samples with the view to obtaining parallel data on each cohort. Characteristics of the three samples are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 Characteristics of the Three Samples

Sample designation	Sampled first in	Age in 1975/80	Sample size	Participation data for	
				Years	Ages
'14-year-old'	1975	14-14.11	6247	78-84	17-23
'10-year-old'	1975	10-10.11	6628	81-85	16-20
'5-year-old'	1980	10-10.11	5473	85-	15-

Origins

The project was initiated in 1978 in response to an RFP with the following terms of reference:

1 To obtain information about the post-school experience of school leavers which might be seen as having implications for the structure, timing and content of secondary education.

2 To feed back into school-decision making the perceptions of ex-students about the strengths and weaknesses of their school experience.

3 To identify critical points in school experience where particular types of failure or particular choices made have predictable long term effects.

4 To test the association between school attainment and length of schooling and the relationship of both to post-school options of students.

5 To examine the relationship between social background, sex, ethnic origin and geographical location on the one hand, and school and post-school achievement and options on the other.

The RFP was initiated under the title, 'A Survey of School Leavers', by the Education Research and Development Committee, a funding agency for educational research in existence over the period 1976 to 1981. In common with many such agencies it allocated part of its funds to 'field-initiated studies' and part to commissioned work in areas seen to be of high priority for the purpose of informing social policy. Three-year funding, on a year-to-year basis, was offered.

Project Design

Most likely five elements of the design proposed won us the contract. First, we argued that the terms of reference, with the exception of the second, could be integrated within the one framework, and we outlined a fairly conventional status attainment model. Each term of reference was identified with particular linkages in the model. Second, we proposed to gather data on national samples of persons. Third, at that time we had available identified samples of two age cohorts and, thus, did not have to use resources to define a sample. Fourth, we had in hand standardized achievement measures on the members of each sample, again at no cost to the project, but also at a time of growing resistance to achievement testing by schools. Fifth, we proposed mail surveys as the only way to get sample coverage within the limits imposed by resources, but proposed as well two fall-back positions in the event that the response to the surveys was as low as everyone predicted it would be.

A Short History

In the first year, 1978, we mailed out some 6200 questionnaires to the members of the '14-year-old' sample, then aged 17 years. We received 80 per cent of them back. On this basis the study firmed-up as a mail survey and funding was continued. In 1981 the 'ten-year-old' sample from 1975 was contacted for the first time, and over the years 1981 to 1984 both samples were surveyed. In 1985 contact with the 14-year-old sample ceased, a further contact with the ten-year-old sample was undertaken, and the '5-year-old' sample, then aged 15 years, was contacted for the first time. Figure 1 summarizes the time scale of the surveys undertaken with each of the three samples.

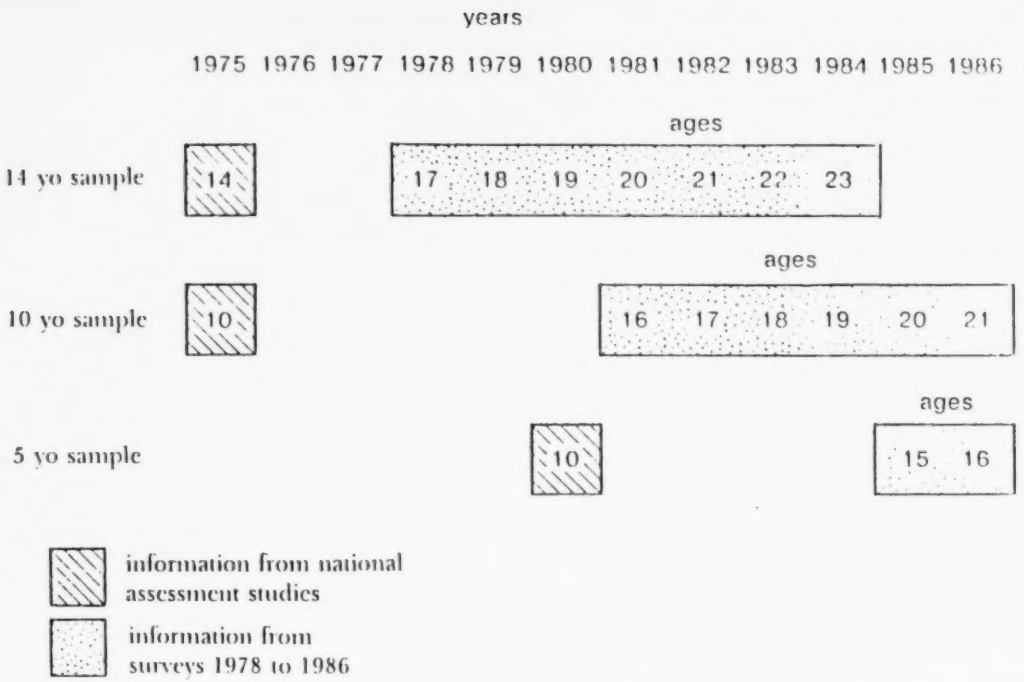

Figure 1 Time Scale for Surveys, 1975 to 1986

Sponsorship

Over the nine years of the project to date funding has been provided by the ACER itself and by the Commonwealth Government. This external funding was provided by the Education Research and Development Committee over the period FY78 to FY80. In subsequent years funding has been provided by a consortium of Federal Government agencies; the Commonwealth Department of Education, the Commonwealth Schools Commission, the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission and the Bureau of Labour Market Research. The first agency mentioned provides the major portion of the funding. Sources and levels of funding over the period 1978 to 1985 are shown in Figure 2. Levels of funding by year are shown standardized to 1983 dollar values.

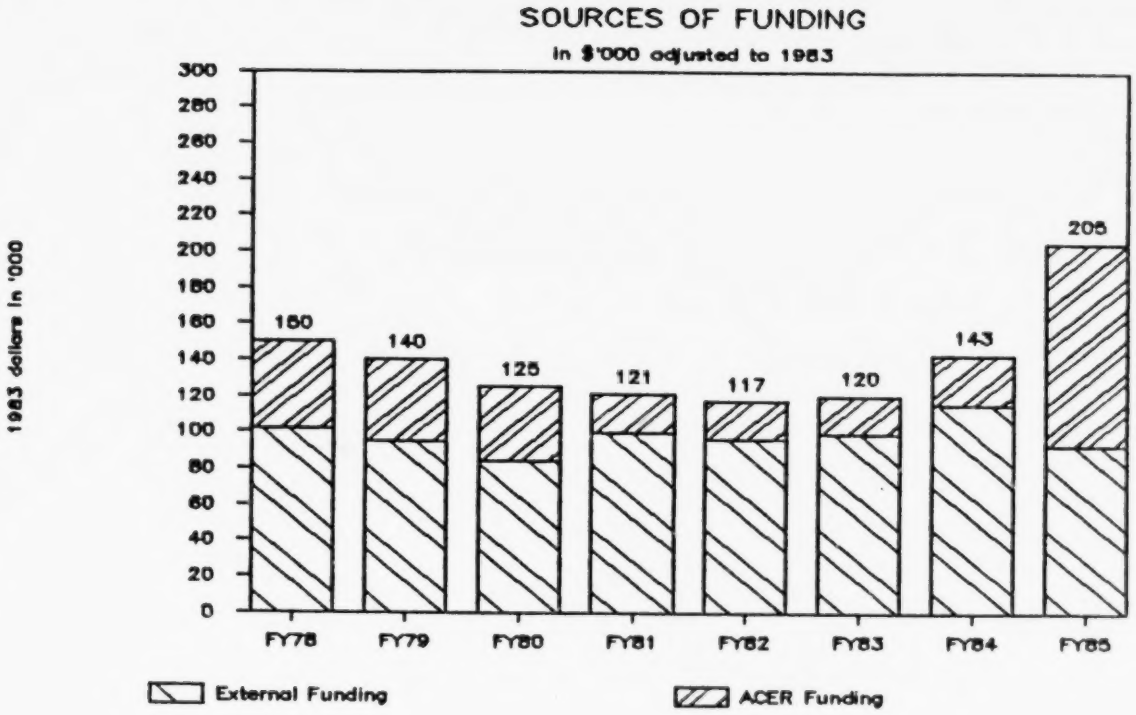

Figure 2 Sources and Level of Funding, FY78 to FY85

Survey Design

The primary concern of the funding agencies is to obtain data on participation in education and the labour force, and on the transitions within and between each. To address these concerns each of the three surveys is structured around a core of panel measures which provides year-by-year information on participation in education and the labour force, information comparable within each sample across years, and between the three samples. The context of this participation is measured by additional questions which appear in one year only or may be repeated over several years.

Questionnaire Design

The design of questionnaires is the subject of a sizeable body of survey design folklore supported with some evidence as to what matters (for instance, Heberlein and Baumgartner, 1978; Schuman and Presser, 1981). In our case we focussed on the question of how we might optimize judgmentally two competing demands; that of maintaining a high response rate while at the same time maintaining the quality of the data. In so doing we made the following assumptions. First, in all contacts, particularly the early ones, questions should be salient to the individuals involved and should look salient. Thus, most of our questions are straightforward and factual; we tend to steer away from questions which purport to measure psychological states, desirable though these may be. Second, we judged that response rates were influenced heavily, and inversely, by questionnaire length, and that length had two immediately recognizable indicators -- multiple pages and staples. Thus, we limit our questionnaires to four pages contained in a single, folded A3 size sheet. Third, we argued that non-response was likely to be concentrated among the least educated of our sample. For this reason the questionnaires emphasize simplicity of language and presentation through short sentences and simple instructions reinforced by non-verbal cues such as arrows leading from one response to the next. Fourth, we considered each question in terms of its possible sensitivity to the respondents and, hence, the likelihood of obtaining a response to the question itself and, also, whether it was likely to jeopardize the response rate as a whole.

Although the questionnaires have evolved somewhat over the past eight years, the basic format remains the same. Each questionnaire contains, within four pages, a core of items bearing on participation and attainments in education and the labour force, along with measures of the following kinds included at various times: quality of life; questions to do with

family background and schooling; questions designed to tap the influence of reference groups during the high school years and immediately thereafter; a series of questions to do with experiences during the first year in the labour force; and, at a time when sample members are in their early twenties, questions to do with living arrangements and family formation.

Multiple questionnaires. To keep within the page limits we have set for ourselves, we develop three questionnaires each year and target them to respondents. Copies of the 1985 questionnaires are attached as Appendix A. The first of these is an 'education' questionnaire (yellow) which includes detailed questions on educational participation. The second (grey) is a 'first-year in the labour force' questionnaire which emphasizes experiences during the transition from education to work. The third (blue) is a 'working' questionnaire focussing on the detail of occupational participation. Members of our samples receive two of these each year and select one to complete and return. Each person receives the education questionnaire in order to capture continuing students and those who may have returned to education. Those who were students in the previous year receive, additionally, a 'first-year-in-the-labour-force' questionnaire to take account of the fact that they may have moved into the workforce. And those who were in the labour-force in the previous year receive a 'working' questionnaire in addition to an 'education' questionnaire.

Questionnaire Content

An indication of the content of questions asked and time of asking, by sample, is provided in Table 2. Those shown constitute the most important items in our opinion. Some items are omitted from this list as is the

detail within each category of item. Details of the core items are provided in the following section.

Table 2 Questionnaire Items by Year by Sample

Questionnaire item	1975	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Achievement	12			3					
Core questions									
status by month			1	1	12	12	12	12	23
education		1	1	1	12	12	12	12	23
occupation		1	1	1	12	12	12	12	23
unemployment		1	1	1	12	12	12	12	23
first year in lab. force		1	1	1	12	12	12	12	23
Other questions									
social origins		1			2				3
quality of life			1	1	1	12	12		
family wealth				1				2	
self-concept of ability				1	2			2	
reference group influence				1	2				3
living arrangements						1	1	12	2
fringe benefits							1		
leisure								1	
locus of control								1	
school system attended				1	2				3
educational/ occupational plans			1		2				3
financial support								12	2

1 = item asked of 14-y-o sample in year indicated.
2 = item asked of 10-y-o sample in year indicated.
3 = item asked of 5-y-o sample in year indicated.

Detailed Nature of Core Questions

The core of questions asked each year is indicated below to provide a specific illustration of what is asked, and how.

Status on a month-by-month basis. The form of this question in the 1985 questionnaires is shown in question 1 on each of the questionnaires in Appendix A. In this item respondents are asked to indicate on a month-by-month basis their educational and/or labour force status. Since multiple responses within columns are possible, the recording of a single status or combination of statuses month by month is possible. The status distinctions made are those between full-time and part-time work, full-time and part-time education, unemployment, and being out of the labour force. Despite our initial reservations about the suitability of this kind of question format respondents seem able to recall their statuses over the past year and to report them in the matrix response structure shown. Data obtained in this way provide both the more obvious measures of participation on a month-by-month basis, and derived measures of stability in a particular status or combination of statuses.

Educational participation. Respondents are asked also to provide detail on their educational participation in a separate question referenced to the month of October. This month was chosen as the reference month on the basis that persons 'dropping out' of education would have done so by October, the events in October were fairly recent in terms of when the questionnaire is received, and because students only rarely complete a course of study prior to November in any year.

The form of this question has varied a little over the years but the basic information asked for has remained the same -- course of study, institution, qualification, major area of interest, participation full-time or part-time, and year level. The form of the question is shown in question 2, yellow questionnaire in Appendix A.

Labour force participation. Details on labour force participation are obtained in analogous questions referenced to the month of October. Two questions are used each year, one eliciting the characteristics of full-time work, the other focussing on part-time work. The characteristics asked include occupational title, income, hours worked per week, and weeks worked in October. The form of the questions used is shown in questions 7 and 8 in the blue questionnaire, Appendix A.

Persons not working. Among those who are not full-time students we consider two categories of persons not working: those who are unemployed -- those not working but looking for work; and those not in the labour force -- those not working and not looking for work. We ask a series of three questions referenced to the month of October in an attempt to obtain information on several aspects of 'not working': reasons for job separation; reasons for not seeking work; problems encountered in looking for a job; and plans for re-entry into the labour force. The form of these questions is shown in questions 4, 5 and 6 in the blue questionnaire in Appendix A.

Transition to work. This item is asked once of each person during their first year in the labour force. Time of leaving education is asked, along with characteristics of the course and institution, but most attention is directed to time taken to find a job, characteristics of the occupation, and length of time in the job. The form of this question is shown in question 3, grey questionnaire, Appendix A.

Data Collection

Over the eight years of the surveys we have despatched some 200,000 pieces of individually addressed mail containing questionnaire and/or reports. These follow a fairly regular cycle each year of the kind indicated in Figure 3. There are three components to this cycle: a mailing component concerned with the assembly, despatch and receipt of questionnaires and reports; a data preparation component concerned with keeping track of persons responding and not responding, changes of address, post-coding of questionnaire items, data entry, data checking, file merging and address file updating; and a questionnaire production component concerned with the content and structure of questionnaires, their printing and the printing of other material to be included in each mailing.

Figure 3 The Data Collection Cycle

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Mailing Cycle

Events in this cycle are indicated in the outer ring of Figure 3. In each of the years 1978 to 1985 questionnaires have been mailed to the home address of each respondent in late-November or early-December. Response rates are monitored to indicate an appropriate time for a follow-up letter containing a reminder, another pair of questionnaires and a return envelope. Typically this mailing takes place in late-January or early-February. A second reminder package containing similar material is sent one month later, usually in late-March or early-April. Occasionally a third reminder mailing has been used. By the end of May virtually all the questionnaires that will be returned have been returned. During July/August reports of various kinds are mailed to respondents. Occasionally reports are included with the year-end mailing of questionnaires.

Data Preparation Cycle

Events in this cycle are indicated in the middle ring of Figure 3. Questionnaires returned through the period December to May are checked in to provide an up-to-date list of respondents and non-respondents, the latter in preparation for follow-up mailings. At the same time changes of address are noted and revised address lists compiled. Each questionnaire is inspected and post-coded as required. Most of this work is completed by the end of May at which time questionnaires are forwarded for coding and data entry. This process is usually complete by early August.

The data files produced are passed through a series of routines which check their completeness and accuracy. Problems arising in this checking process are resolved by a re-examination of the questionnaires. The clean data files are then merged with the existing data as another wave, and consistency checks are carried out. By the end of September this process

has usually been brought to a close and data analysis begins, the first step of which is to generate appropriate weights for the sample units.

Questionnaire Production Cycle

Events in this cycle are shown in the inner ring of Figure 3. Questionnaire production in each year involves a drafting stage which begins mid-year. Draft forms of the questionnaires are circulated for comment both to colleagues and to members of an Advisory Committee established by the funding agencies. The final form of the questionnaire is usually agreed on by September, final design artwork is completed during this month, and printing takes place in October with delivery in early November for assembly prior to the December mailing.

Maintaining Contact

By their nature, longitudinal surveys should invest heavily in maintaining contact with their samples (Clarridge et al., 1976; Call et al., 1982; the several NCES-sponsored 'High School and Beyond' surveys). Sustained tracing of sample members is beyond our means, for the most part. We rely mostly on parents forwarding mail, and on address updates provided on the questionnaires themselves, plus address updating associated with the mailing of reports to the respondents. Thus, each mailing is limited to respondents from the previous year's mailing, some of whom will have moved from the address we have on file. If one assumes that most of the non-response due to refusal to participate occurs in the first year or two, then the steady loss of 400 to 500 persons each year is due mainly to failure to contact the persons in question.

Mid-way through 1982 we undertook two activities designed to locate members lost to the survey to that time. One of these activities -- using respondents to update or to confirm the addresses on non-respondents -- was

used with both samples. This approach to tracing respondents made use of a characteristic of the original school-based sampling design: in 1975 some 25 students of the same age were sampled within each school. In 1982 we were still in contact with roughly half of the students within each of these groups of 25. As part of the 1982 mid-year mailing of reports to respondents, each member of the sample received, on average, a list of twelve names and addresses of non-respondents of the same age in the same school in 1975. Respondents were asked to confirm or to update the addresses of each of the non-respondents listed.

The second approach involved tracing individuals through electoral rolls. This method is time consuming and costly and, in 1982, was possible only with the older sample.

In 1982 both tracing procedures allowed us to update or confirm the names and addresses of some 40 per cent of the non-respondents. 'Makeup' questionnaires were despatched to non-respondents traced in this way.

Sample Attrition and Weighting Adjustments

The original investigation developed into a program of multi-sample longitudinal mail surveys largely because of the high response rates we obtain. On each occasion more than 80 per cent of those contacted in the previous year respond without material inducement to the uninvited and unannounced questionnaires that arrived in their mail around Christmas. The 10 to 20 per cent of the sample who fail to respond are a mixture of the unwilling and the uncontacted, with the latter in the majority. With unlimited resources the unwilling might be persuaded -- through interview, perhaps, or with material inducements -- and the whereabouts of the uncontacted determined. Since our resources do not lend themselves to these somewhat costly exercises, our target sample in each year is limited

to those who responded in the previous year. While we obtain an increasing response rate in later years, the proportion of the original sample retained decreases over the eight years to a little less than 50 per cent. Response rates and sample attrition are indicated in Table 3.

Table 3 Response Rates and Retention Rates, 1975 to 1984

	14-y-o sample							
	1975[a]	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983[b]	1984
Mailed (N)		6247	4919	4001	3445	2965	3615	2897
Returned (N)	6247	4919	4001	3445	2965	2580	2897	2583
Prop'n Resp.	1.00	.79	.81	.86	.86	.87	.80	.89
Prop'n Retained	1.00	.79	.64	.55	.47		.46	.41
	10-y-o sample							
Mailed (N)					6628	4089	3934	3222
Returned (N)	6628				4089	3409	3222	2881
Prop'n Resp.	1.00				.62[c]	.83	.82	.89
Prop'n Retained	1.00				.62	.51	.48	.43

Note:

a data collected in 1975 was by questionnaire administered to students in schools.

b retained sample increased as a result of tracing exercise.

c addresses used were seven years old, those provided by 10-year-old students in 1975.

Compensating for Sample Attrition

The standard advice to those conducting surveys is to make sure that everyone responds: 'Recommendation 1: Collect the survey data as fully and accurately as possible, using call-backs and follow-ups as needed to do so', (Madow et al., 1983:7). While this advice leaves some questions

unanswered, the point is clear: 'statistical methods of dealing with non-response will not completely eliminate the effects of non-response. Biases and distortions will remain, and their effects cannot be estimated from the survey data themselves' (Madow et al., 1983:6).

If one took this recommendation to heart the planning of surveys would rest on one critical factor; either resource levels are sufficient to ensure minimal sample attrition, or there is no point to undertaking the survey. The situation, however, is more complicated in most cases. Where both resources and data are scarce one may be willing to compromise on the question of sample bias in order to obtain information, especially if the nature of the bias is known. Since a good proportion of surveys are so described, a fairly substantial literature has grown up focussing on the kinds of adjustments that might be made to compensate for sample attrition.

Kalton (1983), together with Madow et al. (1983) contain state-of-the art reviews of the literature advising on adjustments for unit non-response. A variety of techniques is available to make these adjustments. These range from simply assuming that the unit non-response is random to rather more complex imputation and weighting approaches. Kalton and Kaspryzk review the relative merits of the different approaches and come to the conclusion that where one is interested in the relationships between variables and in multivariate analyses of the data, weighting is to be preferred over imputation: 'Weighting adjustments for total non-response retain the convariance structure of the respondents, and hence -- unlike imputation procedures -- they are not harmful to multivariate analyses' (Kalton and Kaspryzk, 1982). On this basis we adopted an adjustment procedure which assigned different weights to respondents within the sample.

The adjustment involved post-stratification of the sample using 'years of schooling completed' as the primary stratification variable. Published

data were available in a form which allowed the creation of 192 strata from a 'State by School System by Sex by Years' breakdown. The effect, basically, is to weight up the contribution of the least schooled respondents.

Some effects of these weighting adjustments on the data are shown in Table 4. This table provides 'bias' estimates for each of several baseline variables in each of the years, where bias is defined as the difference between the mean of a variable in the 1975 data (the complete sample) and its analogue in the data for subsequent years expressed in 1975 standard deviation units. The value -0.13 is interpreted as follows: the mean for achievement calculated on the 1983 data for the older sample weighted under the post-stratification scheme is 0.13 of a (1975) standard deviation higher than the mean for achievement calculated on the 6247 cases present in the 1975 data. Comparisons are somewhat limited by the breadth of the variables measured in the 1975 national assessment surveys, basically; achievement, sex, family size, ethnicity, school system and school location. The bias estimates shown indicate the extent of differential attrition among persons so defined.

Table 4 Bias Estimates Across the Years: Both Samples

	Younger sample			Older sample					
	1981	1982	1983	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Sex	-.09	-.09	-.11	-.02	-.02	-.02	-.02	-.02	-.04
Family size	.03	.03	.02	.05	.05	.05	.03	.03	.03
Ethnicity									
Australian born	-.02	-.02	-.05	-.03	-.03	-.03	-.03	-.08	-.08
English born	.02	.02	.05	.07	.07	.07	.10	.11	.08
Non-English born	.01	.01	.01	-.03	-.03	-.03	-.03	.00	.01
School system									
Government school	-.02	-.02	-.03	-.01	.01	-.01	-.01	-.01	-.01
Catholic school	.01	.01	.01	-.03	-.03	-.03	-.03	-.03	-.03
Independent school	.05	.05	.05	.06	.06	.06	.06	.06	.06
School location	-.03	-.03	-.03	-.05	-.05	-.05	-.05	-.05	-.05
Achievement	-.09	-.09	-.11	-.08	-.08	-.08	-.14	-.19	-.13

With the exception of achievement, the differences across the years are minor. We retain somewhat more females than males, more Australian-born than others, fewer persons from English-speaking immigrant backgrounds, and more urban students. Where educational achievement is concerned we are losing disproportionate numbers of the lowest achievers -- the mean level of achievement of the samples in 1983 is some 0.12 of a (1975) standard deviation above the 1975 means.

These data point to the conclusion that the sample is biased toward, at least, those who do well in school and, as a result, biased as well with respect to the concomitants of success in school. Whether this bias is of sufficient magnitude to render the data invalid as a source of useful population estimates is a matter of judgement. One can point to less biased samples, to samples less representative of their parent populations, and to observations, qualified and unqualified, based on the data provided by such samples.

Further analyses not reported here examined the effect of unit non-response on correlation coefficients in much the same way, comparing the adjusted coefficients in later years to those derived from the complete 1975 sample data. Differences between coefficients never exceeded 0.04 and most were of the order of 0.01 or 0.02. Similarly, comparisons of the sample distributions describing educational and occupational participation with published population data showed only minor differences, mostly in unemployment estimates where we tend to underestimate the proportion of youth unemployed.

Informing Policy

Our experience suggests that agencies engaged in policy formulation draw on longitudinal survey data in three main ways, each of which has implications for the design of the survey and for the resources needed to support it.

1 The database/information retrieval function

Longitudinal studies build a data base which is interrogated by agency staff as part of the policy formulation process. In this respect the database is used to answer 'questions of the moment'. These may arise as 'ministerials' or simply as questions which develop out of the policy formulation process -- 'What proportion of students in higher education attended independent schools?' or 'Are females in single-sex schools more likely to enter university than those from co-educational schools?, and so on.

The need for such a database and for ready access to it is clear in our case. The agencies funding our surveys want a database of this kind and procedures which allow ease and speed of access to produce, basically, two- or three-, sometimes four-way, tabulations within subsamples and across the sample as a whole. Our solution is to provide turnkey computing; menu-driven, push-button computing to produce the tabulations required, on the assumption that many of those using the database will be unfamiliar with the details of the data set, and with data analysis in general, including computing. This process is facilitated in those instances where the agencies concerned nominate a resource person to become familiar with the data itself and, by so doing, advise on what is possible and what is not.

In addition to needing answers to questions that arise without notice to be answered immediately, staff within policy agencies need 'up-to-the-moment' information -- 'last year's data tells us about last year; what we need is data on what is happening now.' Minimizing the delay between data collection and data analysis, the matter at issue, is largely a question of resources. At the present time it takes us the best part of a calendar year from the time the initial survey is mailed until the data collected is merged with the

main file. An experiment using OMR questionnaires did not reduce this time, though our equipment may have been responsible in part.

2 A monitoring function

Longitudinal surveys may serve a monitoring function as well in the sense that agencies can plan on obtaining data on a regular basis. The fact that the survey is in place means that a vehicle exists to carry out special purpose data collections whose focus may or may not be within the terms of reference of the main survey. We often receive requests to piggyback special questions on the regular surveys.

3 The sustained analysis function

Obviously, more sustained analyses of the data are in demand as well on the part of both parties. Funding agencies like to see some substantial product as evidence that their money is well spent, and as input to the policy formulation process. And those who carry out longitudinal studies carry them out with the view to publishing the results. (Projects designed to produce public databases are something of an exception in that those who design the survey may not be responsible for the analysis, but the end result is the same.)

Producing these sustained analyses is not a particular problem; however, in our experience, making the findings accessible to a wider audience than that comprised of one's colleagues, is more difficult and, perhaps, more important if the aim of the analyses is to inform policy. The heart of this problem is the translation between what Coleman (1972) calls the 'discipline' and the 'world of action'. Those carrying out these sustained analyses reside in the former world, while the audience engaged in the formulation of policy resides in the latter.

Two assumptions. In developing and reporting analyses over the past eight years we have based our approach on two assumptions: first, that multivariate statistics are necessary to represent accurately and (relatively) unambiguously the complexity of the social processes at hand; and second, that statistics of this kind can be explained in both concept and literal meaning to persons other than the initiated in such a way that policy development may be informed by the analyses.

Presenting multivariate statistics. In the early years of the project we presented the results of these analyses as tables of partial regression coefficients with an emphasis on metric coefficients for the concrete interpretations they provide -- 'other things equal, each year of schooling is worth n dollars in weekly income', or something of the sort. The form of the second stage in this development was predicated on the assumption that the interpretation of these statistics in percentage terms might make them more accessible still. The analyses conducted on this basis used dichotomous dependent variables where there was no meaningful metric involved and, in so doing, imposed 'pass/fail', mastery/non-mastery', 'ever/never' types of metrics on variables.

The third stage of this development is our present stage. We do not use summary statistics at all but take to its logical conclusion the assumption about the value of casting these statistics in percentage terms. We treat the data totally in percentage terms providing observed and adjusted percentage distributions for each variable. Bachman and others have taken this same approach at times (Bachman et al., 1978).

Without going into detail we can illustrate this approach by reference to the data on just one variable in a model used to guide

some recent analyses; father's occupation, as it affects completion of the full twelve years of secondary school. Three sets of participation rates are shown: those observed; those estimated under the first set of controls (Equity V), actually the total causal effect; and those estimated all other things equal (Equity H), the total direct effect. Data on both samples are shown; 'ftn19' refers to the 14-year-old sample at age 19, while 'ten19' refers to the 10-year-old sample at age 19, in the years 1980 and 1984 respectively. At the present time it is a little too early to comment on the value of such an approach. Its liabilities are clear; the sacrifice of the parsimony of summary statistics for the detail of percentage distributions. However, if the presentation of data in this way facilitates its acceptance in the policy formulation process then this is all to the good.

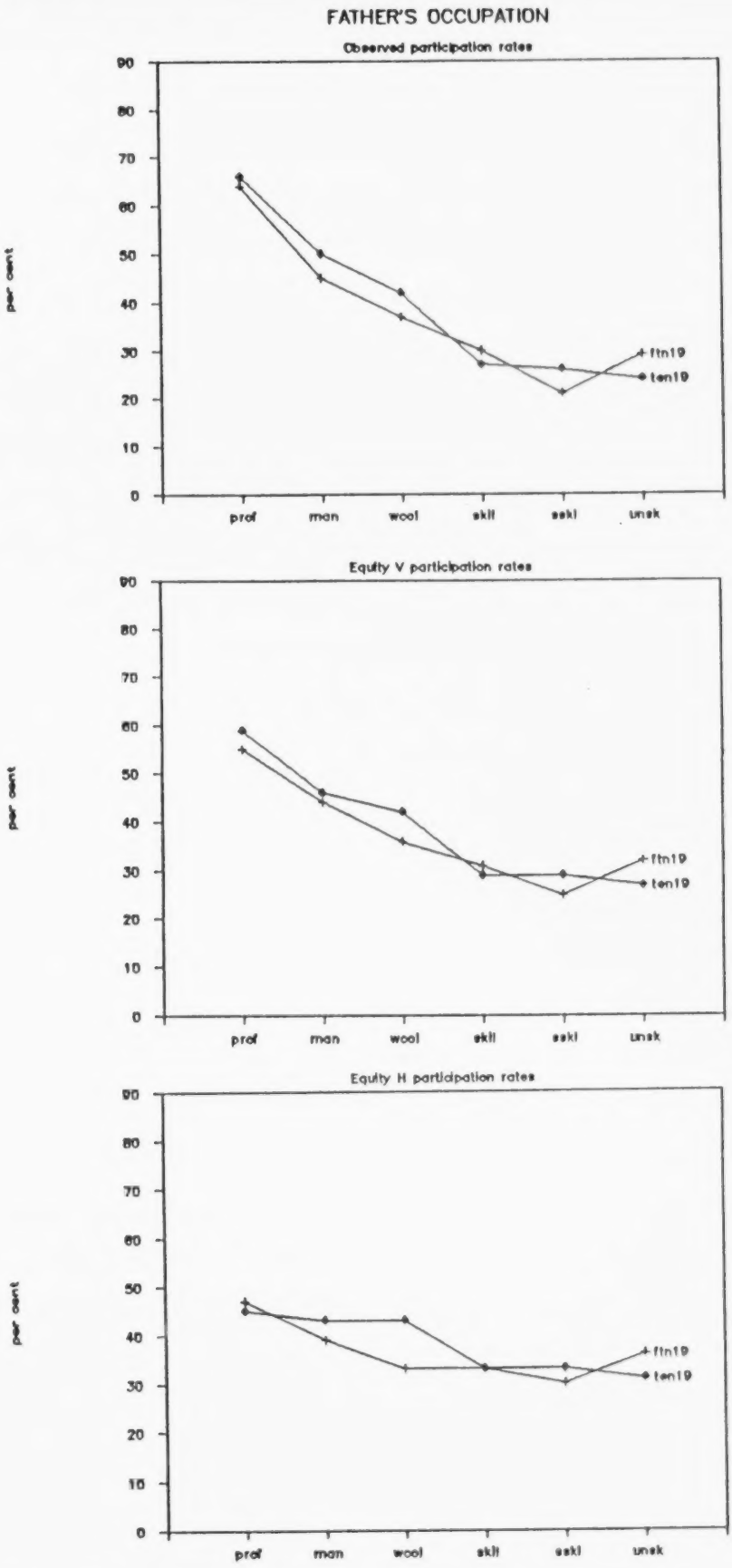

Figure 4 Observed and Adjusted Percentage Distributions

Resources and Longitudinal Studies

Longitudinal studies are not simply the sum of a series of cross-sectional studies, at least as far as resources are concerned. The need to maintain contact with the persons surveyed from one year to the next, the building of cumulative data files, the compounding problem of sample attrition, a rapidly waning novelty effect for the survey, the need to convince respondents to answer questions which appear to be the same from one year to the next, and the fact that as one year's data are being finalized the next year's collection is beginning, imposes heavy resource demands on the project. To funding agencies used to dealing with one-off, cross-sectional surveys and, if they are educational research funding agencies, with one-off, cross-sectional surveys of students in schools, where schools act in loco parentis to guarantee response, these resource demands probably seem overstated. Moreover, funds allocated to projects often bear only a marginal relationship to those requested, simply because that's all there is. The temptation, of course, is to settle for the amount offered and make do, in the hope that more will be forthcoming. Additionally, at times it may well be that requests for funding are themselves understated by research workers generalizing from experience with cross-sectional surveys and/or using their knowledge of what is likely to be available. At the time of making application for funds, any level of funding may look better than no funding at all.

As indicated in Figure 2, our longitudinal studies program has been operating with a budget which declined from $150,000 in the initial year to around $120,000 in years three, four, five and six, and rose again to $205,000 in the eighth year. All staff salaries and all project costs are contained in these figures.

Figure 5 shows total costs per respondent in each year of the surveys along with the cost of data collection alone. In each year the all-up cost of obtaining data and bringing it to the stage where it is merged with the existing data, is about $10 per person. This includes printing, mailing, coding and data entry. From our point of view this is bargain-basement survey research bought, unfortunately at somewhat more than its apparent cost.

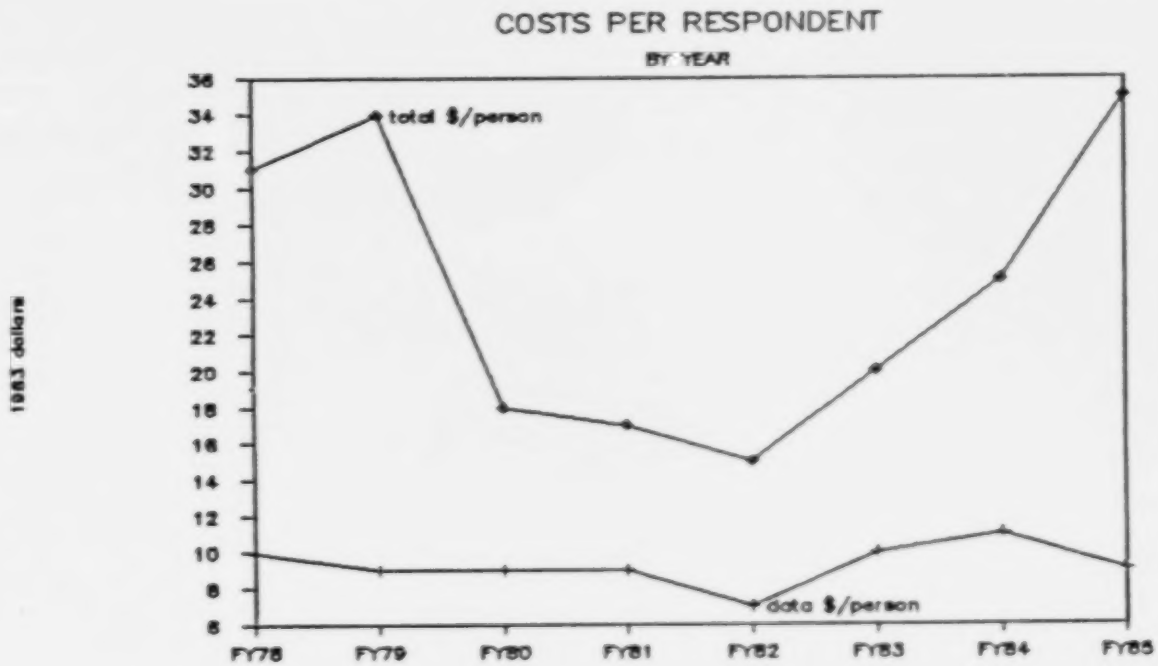

Figure 5 Total Costs and Data Collection Costs per Respondent by Years

The difference between total costs and data costs reflects the number of research staff working on the project. This is seen more clearly in Figure 6 which shows project staff matched against persons surveyed by year. These data make clear the fact that as the number of persons surveyed increased in 1981 with the addition of the 10-year-old sample, project staffing levels reached a low of 2.2 FTE persons responsible for all aspects of two surveys involving a total of 10,000 persons.

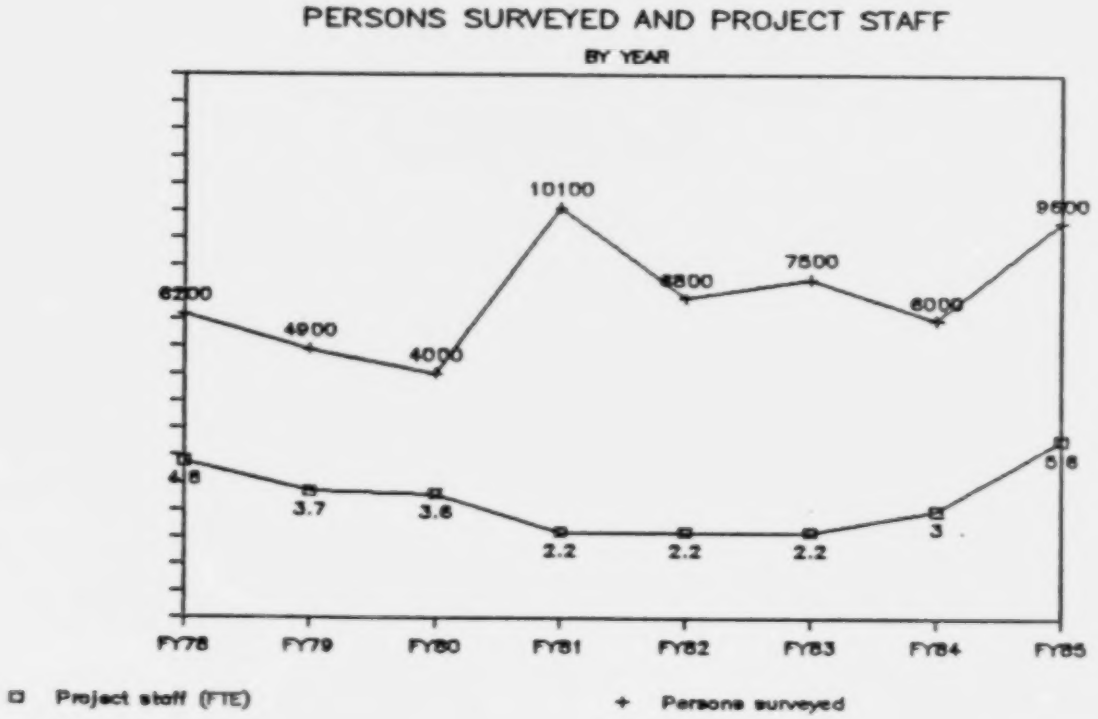

Figure 6 Persons Surveyed and Project Staffing

The implications of this situation are fairly obvious. Given that data collection must be undertaken as a matter of priority, otherwise there would be no longitudinal study, as the number of staff decreased the time of those remaining was taken up increasingly with data collection activities that were expanding in scope -- at the expense of data analysis. The effect of this is a decrease in reporting from the project, with consequent demands from funding agencies that reporting return to its previous levels.

Personal experience with longitudinal studies in Australia, Sweden and Canada suggests that a decline in reporting over the life of the study may well be more common than anyone would wish -- and serves to shorten that life-span. Interests change, administration grows, staff move on, the political fortunes of project directors, funding agencies and governments change, yet the commitment to regular data collections remains constant.

If one assumes that longitudinal studies on a national level are important and should continue, and most likely we would argue that they should, then we suggest that the following elements are worth thinking about, certainly in an Australian context, but perhaps more generally.

1 Providing an institutional identification rather than an individual one in order to provide a stable identity for the study which is independent of those who staff it at any one time, and to which a long-term funding commitment can be made.

2 Seeking government funding, possibly from a consortium of agencies, because national longitudinal studies are expensive and, in most cases, would require special direct funding.

3 Seeking a long-term commitment of funds in order to plan a design stretching over several years, and provide the guarantees necessary to ensure continuity of staffing.

4 Negotiating the terms of reference, if not in their actual wording, then in the meaning of this wording, in order that each party understands and reaches agreement on what is meant and what is possible within the limits of the resources available.

5 Nominating a resource person in the agency or agencies most concerned with regular access to the data so that questions about what is possible, what is not, and what alternatives are available within the data can be answered within the agency. Most likely such a person would take responsibility for the project itself within the agency with the implication that the person assigned ought to have an understanding of surveys, data and data analysis.

6 Establishing a database which allows agency personnel to interrogate the data, through some kind of turnkey computing if necessary, independently of the research personnel working on the study itself.

7 Providing for a monitoring capability such that the regular availability of the survey to carry special purpose questions is known to be part of its design, and can be taken into account in the forward plans of agencies.

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IN 1985

Australian Council
for
Educational Research

WERE YOU A FULL-TIME STUDENT FOR MOST OF OCTOBER 1985?

YES ☐

This is NOT the questionnaire for you

Would you please start on the yellow questionnaire

NO ☐

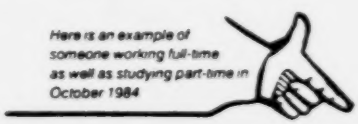
This is the questionnaire for you

Would you please begin here

WHAT DID YOU DO IN 1985?

DESCRIBE WHAT YOU DID EACH MONTH BY TICKING AS MANY BOXES AS YOU NEED TO

Here is an example of someone working full-time as well as studying part-time in October 1984



1985

FOR MOST OF THAT MONTH I WAS:	OCT 84	JAN 85	FEB 85	MAR 85	APR 85	MAY 85	JUNE 85	JULY 85	AUG 85	SEPT 85	OCT 85	NOV 85	DEC 85
Working full-time (include paid holidays)	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Working part-time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Home duties	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Not working but looking for work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Not working	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A full-time student	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A part-time student	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other 1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(e.g. travel) 2 ..... *(please tell us)*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1

YES ☐ NO ☐ *Please go on to question 3*

- What qualification did you get? *(e.g. degree, diploma, certificate, other)*
- Where was the course located? *(e.g. University, CAE, TAFE/DFE, Other)*
- What was the name of the institution? *(e.g. Bruce College of TAFE)*
- When did you begin this course? *Month*..... *Year*.....
- When did you finish this course? *Month*..... *Year*.....
- What was your **major area** of study or training? *(e.g. plumbing, engineering, teaching, etc.)*
- Were you a full-time or part-time student? *full-time* ☐ *part-time* ☐

2

NO ☐ YES ☐ *Please go on to question 8*

- HAVE YOU EVER HAD A JOB?

YES ☐ NO ☐ *Please go on to question 6*

- WHY DID YOU LEAVE YOUR LAST JOB? *How important was each of these reasons?*

(Please tick one box in each line)

	Very important	*Fairly important*	*Not very important*	*Not at all important*
• I was laid off	☐	☐	☐	☐
• I went into full-time study	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Health reasons	☐	☐	☐	☐
• I was taking a break from working	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Too far to travel/transport problems	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Unsuitable hours	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Other..... *(please tell us)*	☐	☐	☐	☐

5

DID YOU HAVE A JOB IN OCTOBER 1985?

YES ☐ NO ☐ *Please go to question 9*

- What was your main **full-time** job in October 1985?
- What did you do in this job?

IN OCTOBER 1985:

- How many hours a week did you work at this job?..... *hours*
- How many **weeks** did you work during October?..... *weeks*
- Altogether about how much take home pay did you get **each week**? $.....
- Up to the end of October 1985, how long had you been working in this job?

years *months*

8

WHEN DID YOU FINISH FULL-TIME STUDIES?

- *Which month?*..... *Which year?*.....
- What type of institution were you enrolled in at the time? *(e.g. University, CAE, TAFE DFE, School)*
- What was your major area of study or training? *(e.g. plumbing, engineering, teaching, etc.)*

HAVE YOU HAD ANY JOBS SINCE FINISHING FULL-TIME STUDY?

YES ☐ NO ☐ *Please go on to question 6*

YOUR FIRST JOB AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL:

- When did you start your first job? *month*..... *year*.....
- Was this job full-time or part-time?

Full-time ☐ *Part-time* ☐

Have you ever had a full-time job?

YES ☐ NO ☐ *Please go on to question 4*

- When did you start your first full-time job? *month*..... *year*.....
- What was your first full-time job?

Occupation .....

What did you do in that job?.....

About how much take-home pay did you get **each week**? $.....

- Was this job:

Permanent ☐ *Temporary* ☐ *Casual* ☐ *Other* ☐

- Was it the kind of job you really wanted?

Yes ☐ *Almost* ☐ *Not really* ☐ *No* ☐

- Are you still working in your **first** job?

No ☐ *Yes* ☐ *Please go on to question 4*

- How long did you work in that job?

years *months*

3

HOW MANY FULL-TIME JOBS DID YOU HAVE IN 1985?.....

HOW MANY PART-TIME OR CASUAL JOBS DID YOU HAVE IN 1985?

4

WERE YOU LOOKING FOR A JOB IN OCTOBER 1985?

NO ☐ YES ☐ *Please go to question 7*

- WHY WAS THIS? *How important was each of these reasons?*

(Please tick one box in each line)

	Very important	*Fairly important*	*Not very important*	*Not at all important*
• I was working at home, looking after children	☐	☐	☐	☐
• I was studying full-time	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Health reasons	☐	☐	☐	☐
• There were no suitable jobs available	☐	☐	☐	☐
• There were no jobs available	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Other..... *(please tell us)*	☐	☐	☐	☐

- DO YOU PLAN TO LOOK FOR A JOB AT SOME LATER DATE?

NO ☐ YES ☐ *Please go to question 10*

- As soon as the job situation improves ☐
- When my children start school ☐
- When I have completed my studies ☐
- When I have travelled around for a while ☐
- Other..... *(please tell us)* ☐

Please go on to question 10

6

WHAT WERE THE MAIN PROBLEMS YOU FACED IN LOOKING FOR A JOB IN OCTOBER 1985? *How important was each of these problems for you?*

(Please tick one box in each line)

	Very important	*Fairly important*	*Not very important*	*Not at all important*
• Employers said I was too young	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Finding a job with suitable hours	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Employers said I was too old	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Finding a job I can get to easily	☐	☐	☐	☐
• I didn't have enough experience	☐	☐	☐	☐
• There were no jobs available	☐	☐	☐	☐
• I couldn't find a job I liked	☐	☐	☐	☐
• My health	☐	☐	☐	☐
• I didn't have enough education/skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Employers wanted someone of the opposite sex	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Employers wanted someone of another ethnic background	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Other..... *(please tell us)*	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please go on to question 10

7

DID YOU HAVE A PART-TIME OR CASUAL JOB IN OCTOBER 1985?

YES ☐ NO ☐ *Please go on to question 10*

- What was your main **part-time** or **casual** job in October 1985?
- What did you do in this job?
- Up to the end of October 1985, how long had you been working in this job?

Years *Months*

- In October 1985, how many other **part-time** or **casual** jobs did you have?
- Altogether about how many hours a week did you work in **part-time** or **casual** jobs during October 1985?

Hours

- How many weeks did you work **part-time** or **casual** during October?

Weeks

- Altogether, how much take-home pay did you get **each week**?

$.....

9

WERE YOU DOING ANY COURSES OF STUDY IN OCTOBER 1985?

YES ☐ NO ☐ Did you want to, but couldn't? YES ☐ NO ☐ *Please go to question 11*

- What type of course was it? *(e.g. certificate, preapprentice, degree, etc.)*
- Where was the course located? *(e.g. University, CAE, TAFE DFE, Other)*
- What was the name of the institution? *(e.g. Bruce College of TAFE)*
- When did you begin this course? *Month*..... *Year*.....
- When will you finish the course? *Month*..... *Year*.....
- What kind of qualification will you get? *(e.g. degree, diploma, certificate, other)*
- What is your major area of study or training? *(e.g. plumbing, engineering, teaching, etc.)*
- Were you a full-time or part-time student? *full-time* ☐ *part-time* ☐

10

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

HOW WELL DID YOUR LAST YEARS AT SECONDARY SCHOOL PROVIDE YOU WITH:

(tick one box in each line)

	Very well	*Rather well*	*Rather poorly*	*Very poorly*
• Specific skills in your job or studies	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Knowledge for your job or studies	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Self-awareness and understanding of other people	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Basic skills of reading, writing and calculation	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Critical thinking	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Problem solving skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Experience of what work is like	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Knowing how to obtain a job	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Knowledge of career options	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Ability to work independently	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Activities in leisure time	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Study skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Knowledge of government and community structures	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Other.....	☐	☐	☐	☐

(please tell us)

11

WHERE WERE YOU LIVING IN OCTOBER 1985?

- With parents ☐
- Not with parents
  - In own house/flat ☐
  - In rented house/flat ☐
  - Other.....

(please tell us)

How much does it cost you each week for rent/mortgage/board?

$.....

12

THANK YOU

Please post this back in the envelope provided

PS: In 1986 we would like to send you another report from this project. Can we always reach you at the address we used this time? If not, what address should we use?

NEW ADDRESS

NAME: ..... FIRST NAME ..... FAMILY NAME

ADDRESS: ..... NUMBER ..... STREET

..... SUBURB/TOWN ..... STATE

..... POSTCODE ..... PHONE NUMBER

IN 1985

Australian Council
for
Educational Research

WERE YOU A FULL-TIME STUDENT FOR MOST OF OCTOBER 1985?

NO ☐

This is NOT the questionnaire for you

Would you please start on the blue questionnaire

YES ☐

This is the questionnaire for you

Would you please begin here

WHAT DID YOU DO IN 1985?

DESCRIBE WHAT YOU DID EACH MONTH BY TICKING AS MANY BOXES AS YOU NEED TO

Here is an example of someone working full-time as well as studying part-time in October 1984

1985

FOR MOST OF THAT MONTH I WAS:	OCT 84	JAN 85	FEB 85	MAR 85	APR 85	MAY 85	JUNE 85	JULY 85	AUG 85	SEPT 85	OCT 85	NOV 85	DEC 85
Working full-time (include paid holidays)	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Working part-time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Home duties	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Not working but looking for work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Not working	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A full-time student	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A part-time student	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other 1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(e.g. travel) 2 ..... *(please tell us)*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1

STUDYING DURING 1985

WHAT COURSE(S) OF STUDY WERE YOU DOING IN OCTOBER 1985?

Would you please tell us a few things about the course(s)?

- What type of course was it? *(e.g. certificate, preapprentice, degree, etc.)*
- *Where was the course located? (e.g. University, CAE, TAFE/DFE, Other)*
- What was the name of the institution? *(e.g. Bruce College of TAFE)*
- When did you begin this course? *Month..... Year.....*
- When will you finish the course? *Month..... Year.....*
- What kind of qualification will you get? *(e.g. degree, diploma, certificate, other)*
- What is your major area of study or training? *(e.g. plumbing, engineering, teaching, etc.)*

2

WHILE YOU WERE A STUDENT IN 1985 (in university, CAE etc.), about how much of what you needed to live on came from each of the following.

Count everything—a place to live, food, clothing, spending money and fees, books, etc.

(tick one box in each line)

	none	*some*	*half*	*most*	*all*
• My parents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Other relatives	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Part-time work during the year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Summer jobs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Government education allowances (e.g. TEAS)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Scholarships	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

(please tell us)

3

AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL

HOW IMPORTANT WERE THE FOLLOWING REASONS FOR GOING ON TO FURTHER EDUCATION AFTER SECONDARY SCHOOL?

(Tick one box in each line)

	Very important	*Somewhat important*	*Not very important*	*Not at all important*
• To develop talents and creative abilities	☐	☐	☐	☐
• To learn more about people	☐	☐	☐	☐
• To get training for a specific job	☐	☐	☐	☐
• To study in a field that really interests me	☐	☐	☐	☐
• To gain entrance to a financially attractive career	☐	☐	☐	☐
• To be with friends who are going on with further education	☐	☐	☐	☐
• To learn more about subjects which interested me at school	☐	☐	☐	☐
• To have a professional career	☐	☐	☐	☐
• To learn some practical skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
• To fill in time until I decide what to do	☐	☐	☐	☐
• To improve my job prospects	☐	☐	☐	☐
• To please my parents	☐	☐	☐	☐

4

DID YOU COMPLETE ANY COURSES OF STUDY AFTER LEAVING SECONDARY SCHOOL?

YES ☐ NO ☐ *Please go on to question 6*

- What qualification did you get? *(e.g. degree, diploma, certificate, other)*
- Where was the course located? *(e.g. University, CAE, TAFE/DFE, Other)*
- What was the name of the institution? *(e.g. Bruce College of TAFE)*
- When did you begin this course? *Month..... Year.....*
- When did you finish this course? *Month..... Year.....*
- What was your major area of study or training? *(e.g. plumbing, engineering, teaching, etc.)*
- Were you a full-time or part-time student? *full-time* ☐ *part-time* ☐

5

WORKING

DID YOU HAVE A PART-TIME OR CASUAL JOB IN OCTOBER 1985?

YES ☐ NO ☐ *Please go on to question 7*

- What was your main **part-time** or **casual** job in October 1985?
- What did you do in this job?
- Up to the end of October 1985, how long had you been working in this job?

  ..... Years ..... Months.
- In October 1985, how many other **part-time** or **casual** jobs did you have?
- Altogether about how many hours a **week** did you work in **part-time** or **casual** jobs during October 1985?

  ..... Hours
- How many weeks did you work **part-time** or **casual** during October?

  ..... Weeks
- Altogether, how much take-home pay did you get **each week**?

  $.....

6

WERE YOU LOOKING FOR A JOB IN OCTOBER 1985?

NO ☐ YES ☐ What kind of job? *full-time* ☐ *part-time* ☐ *Please go on to question 9*

- HAVE YOU EVER HAD A JOB?

  YES ☐ NO ☐ *Please go on to question 9*
- What was your last main job?
- Was it full-time or part-time? *full-time* ☐ *part-time* ☐
- How long did you work in this job? *..... Years ..... Months*

7

HOW MANY FULL-TIME JOBS DID YOU HAVE IN 1985?.....

HOW MANY PART-TIME OR CASUAL JOBS DID YOU HAVE IN 1985?.....

8

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

HOW WELL DID YOUR LAST YEARS AT SECONDARY SCHOOL PROVIDE YOU WITH:

(tick one box in each line)

	Very well	*Rather well*	*Rather poorly*	*Very poorly*
• Specific skills in your job or studies	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Knowledge for your job or studies	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Self-awareness and understanding of other people	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Basic skills of reading, writing and calculation	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Critical thinking	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Problem solving skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Experience of what work is like	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Knowing how to obtain a job	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Knowledge of career options	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Ability to work independently	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Activities in leisure time	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Study skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Knowledge of government and community structures	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Other	☐	☐	☐	☐

(please tell us)

9

WHERE WERE YOU LIVING IN OCTOBER 1985?

- With parents ☐
- Not with parents
  - In own house/flat ☐
  - In rented house/flat ☐
  - Other ..... ☐

(please tell us)

How much does it cost you each week for rent, mortgage board?

$.....

10

THANK YOU

Please post this back in the envelope provided

PS: In 1986 we would like to send you another report from this project. Can we always reach you at the address we used this time? If not, what address should we use?

NEW ADDRESS

NAME: ..... FIRST NAME ..... FAMILY NAME

ADDRESS: ..... NUMBER ..... STREET

..... SUBURB/TOWN ..... STATE

..... POSTCODE ..... PHONE NUMBER

IN 1985

Australian Council
for
Educational Research

WERE YOU A FULL-TIME STUDENT FOR MOST OF OCTOBER 1985?

YES ☐

This is NOT the questionnaire for you

Would you please start on the yellow questionnaire

NO ☐

This is the questionnaire for you

Would you please begin here

WHAT DID YOU DO IN 1985?

DESCRIBE WHAT YOU DID EACH MONTH BY TICKING AS MANY BOXES AS YOU NEED TO

Here is an example of someone working full-time as well as studying part-time in October 1984

1985

FOR MOST OF THAT MONTH I WAS:	OCT 84	JAN 85	FEB 85	MAR 85	APR 85	MAY 85	JUNE 85	JULY 85	AUG 85	SEPT 85	OCT 85	NOV 85	DEC 85
Working full-time (include paid holidays)	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Working part-time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Home duties	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Not working but looking for work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Not working	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A full-time student	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A part-time student	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other 1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(e.g. travel) 2 ..... *(please tell us)*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1

DID YOU COMPLETE ANY COURSES OF STUDY AFTER LEAVING SECONDARY SCHOOL?

YES ☐ NO ☐ *Please go on to question 3*

- What qualification did you get? *(e.g. degree, diploma, certificate, other)*
- Where was the course located? *(e.g. University, CAE, TAFE DFE, Other)*
- What was the name of the institution? *(e.g. Bruce College of TAFE)*
- When did you begin this course? Month..... Year.....
- When did you finish this course? Month..... Year.....
- What was your major area of study or training? *(e.g. plumbing, engineering, teaching, etc.)*
- Were you a full-time or part-time student? full-time ☐ part-time ☐

2

WERE YOU DOING ANY COURSES OF STUDY IN OCTOBER 1985?

YES ☐ NO ☐ Did you want to, but couldn't? YES ☐ NO ☐ *Please go to question 4*

- What type of course was it? *(e.g. certificate, preapprentice, degree, etc.)*
- Where was the course located? *(e.g. University, CAE, TAFE DFE, Other)*
- What was the name of the institution? *(e.g. Bruce College of TAFE)*
- When did you begin this course? Month..... Year.....
- When will you finish the course? Month..... Year.....
- What kind of qualification will you get? *(e.g. degree, diploma, certificate, other)*
- What is your major area of study or training? *(e.g. plumbing, engineering, teaching, etc.)*
- Were you a full-time or part-time student? full-time ☐ part-time ☐

3

A1

DID YOU HAVE A JOB IN OCTOBER 1985?

NO ☐ YES ☐ *Please go on to question 7*

- HAVE YOU EVER HAD A JOB?

YES ☐ NO ☐ *Please go on to question 5*

- WHY DID YOU LEAVE YOUR LAST JOB? *How important was each of these reasons?*

(Please tick one box in each line)

	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not at all important
• I was laid off	☐	☐	☐	☐
• I went into full-time study	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Health reasons	☐	☐	☐	☐
• I was taking a break from working	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Too far to travel/ transport problems	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Unsuitable hours	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Other.....	☐	☐	☐	☐

(please tell us)

4

WERE YOU LOOKING FOR A JOB IN OCTOBER 1985?

NO ☐ YES ☐ *Please go to question 6*

- WHY WAS THIS? *How important was each of these reasons?*

(Please tick one box in each line)

	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not at all important
• I was working at home, looking after children	☐	☐	☐	☐
• I was studying full-time	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Health reasons	☐	☐	☐	☐
• There were no suitable jobs available	☐	☐	☐	☐
• There were no jobs available	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Other.....	☐	☐	☐	☐

(please tell us)

- DO YOU PLAN TO LOOK FOR A JOB AT SOME LATER DATE?

NO ☐ YES ☐ *Please go to question 9*

- As soon as the job situation improves
- When my children start school
- When I have completed my studies
- When I have travelled around for a while
- Other.....

(please tell us)

5

Please go on to question 9

WHAT WERE THE MAIN PROBLEMS YOU FACED IN LOOKING FOR A JOB IN OCTOBER 1985? *How important was each of these problems for you?*

(Please tick one box in each line)

	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not at all important
• Employers said I was too young	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Finding a job with suitable hours	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Employers said I was too old	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Finding a job I can get to easily	☐	☐	☐	☐
• I didn't have enough experience	☐	☐	☐	☐
• There were no jobs available	☐	☐	☐	☐
• I couldn't find a job I liked	☐	☐	☐	☐
• My health	☐	☐	☐	☐
• I didn't have enough education/ skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Employers wanted someone of the opposite sex	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Employers wanted someone of another ethnic background	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Other.....	☐	☐	☐	☐

(please tell us)

6

Please go on to question 8

DID YOU HAVE A FULL-TIME JOB IN OCTOBER 1985?

YES ☐ NO ☐ *Please go to question 8*

- What was your main **full-time** job in October 1985?
- What did you do in this job?

IN OCTOBER 1985:

- How many hours a **week** did you work at this job? ..... hours
- How many **weeks** did you work during October? ..... weeks
- Altogether about how much take home pay did you get **each week**? $
- Up to the end of October 1985, how long had you been working in this job?

..... years ..... months

7

DID YOU HAVE A PART-TIME OR CASUAL JOB IN OCTOBER 1985?

YES ☐ NO ☐ *Please go to question 9*

- What was your main **part-time** or **casual** job in October 1985?
- What did you do in this job?
- Up to the end of October 1985, how long had you been working in this job?

..... Years ..... Months

- In October 1985 how many other **part-time** or **casual** jobs did you have?
- Altogether about how many hours a **week** did you work in **part-time** or **casual** jobs during October 1985?

..... Hours

- How many **weeks** did you work **part-time** or **casual** during October?

..... Weeks

- Altogether, how much take-home pay did you get **each week**?

$

8

HOW MANY FULL-TIME JOBS DID YOU HAVE IN 1985? .....

HOW MANY PART-TIME OR CASUAL JOBS DID YOU HAVE IN 1985? .....

9

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A2

HOW WELL DID YOUR LAST YEARS AT SECONDARY SCHOOL PROVIDE YOU WITH:

(tick one box in each line)

	Very well	*Rather well*	*Rather poorly*	*Very poorly*
• Specific skills in your job or studies	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Knowledge for your job or studies	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Self-awareness and understanding of other people	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Basic skills of reading, writing and calculation	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Critical thinking	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Problem solving skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Experience of what work is like	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Knowing how to obtain a job	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Knowledge of career options	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Ability to work independently	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Activities in leisure time	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Study skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Knowledge of government and community structures	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Other _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

(please tell us)

10

WHERE WERE YOU LIVING IN OCTOBER 1986?

- With parents ☐
- Not with parents
  - In own house/flat ☐
  - In rented house/flat ☐
  - Other _____

(Please tell us)

How much does it cost you each week for rent/mortgage/board?

$ _____

11

THANK YOU

Please post this back in the envelope provided

PS: In 1988 we would like to send you another report from this project. Can we always reach you at the address we used this time? If not, what address should we use?

NEW ADDRESS

NAME: _____
FIRST NAME FAMILY NAME

ADDRESS: _____
NUMBER STREET

_____
SUBURB/TOWN STATE

_____
POSTCODE PHONE NUMBER